



Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group

Statement of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs on the December 10 Referendum in Nagorno-Karabakh

**Moscow, Paris, Washington D.C.
December 11, 2006**

The OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs took note that the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh held a referendum on December 10 on a draft “constitution” of the so-called “Nagorno-Karabakh Republic,” which no member of the international community – including the Co-Chair countries – recognizes as an independent state. The Co-Chairs do not believe that such a referendum will contribute to a negotiated settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Any future legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh should be determined without the threat or use of force and only as the result of political negotiations between all parties in the framework of the Minsk Process. Conducting such a referendum now, thus preempting the final legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh, rather than forging a compromise, is particularly unhelpful at a moment when the OSCE Minsk Group-mediated negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan appear to be on a constructive path. The Co-Chairs expect that the results of this referendum, which are not internationally recognized, will have no negative effect on emerging prospects for an agreement between the sides on basic principles for the settlement of the conflict.